

May 7, 1999

Food and Drug Administration
Jane Henney Commissioner, F.D.A.,
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471,
Rockville, MD 20857
Docket No. 98-CV-1300

5355 '99 MAY 21 P2:09

Dear Ms. Henney:

The following is excerpted from the Organic Consumers Association news page. It reflects my own concerns about the safety (or lack thereof) of the American food supply. Not only genetically-engineered "foods" but animals, including poultry, fed antibacterial growth hormones are a threat to our health and well-being. I expect our government agencies to act on behalf of the national population's safety first, rather than cow-tow to agri-businesses's demands/lobbies to promote overuse of their new products or irresponsible farming practices!

Although I rarely eat flesh, and never red meat, I do eat dairy products and occasionally poultry, so I'm at risk. I demand that you do your job to protect our food supply! This includes the prohibition of prophylactic drug use in farm animals used for food production, the labelling of ALL food products that contain GE ingredients/chemical additives as well as irradiated food products. We all have a right to know what's being done to the food we eat.

Sincerely,

Kate
Kate Houston
PO Box 495
Ephraim, WI 54211

Since 1993, the U.S. government has allowed 36 biotech foods and crops onto the market, with absolutely no labeling or special pre-market safety testing required. Some are whole foods, and many are included as ingredients in processed food. They are all unlabeled. And right now, the only way to ensure you aren't eating genetically engineered food is to buy organic.

There are several important efforts in the US to give consumers better information about what they are buying and eating. And just as importantly, require extensive safety testing of these genetically engineered crops before they enter the market.

In May of last year, attorneys at the Center for Food Safety filed a comprehensive lawsuit on behalf of consumers, scientists, environmentalists, chefs, and religious groups to force the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to require mandatory labeling and adequate safety testing of all genetically engineered foods and crops.

"The FDA has placed the interests of a handful of biotechnology companies ahead of their responsibility to protect public health," stated Andrew Kimbrell, Executive Director of the CFS, and co-counsel on the case. "By failing to require testing and labeling of genetically engineered foods, the agency has made consumers unknowing guinea pigs for potentially harmful, unregulated food substances."

The CFS charges that current FDA and USDA labeling policies not only ignore public surveys that show 90% of American consumers want mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods; but also blatantly contradict federal laws, such as the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, which mandate the labeling of "materially altered" foods such as those which have been subjected to nuclear irradiation. In addition, the CFS lawsuit calls attention to the fact that current "no labeling" policies constitute a violation of many Americans' spiritual and religious beliefs.

The biotech industry has vigorously fought against any attempts at labeling genetically engineered food. Just as mandatory labeling has hurt the commercialization of irradiated food in the United States, biotech labeling would almost certainly radically reduce the profitability of gene foods or even drive controversial products such as rBGH (recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone), Roundup Ready Soybeans, and Bt-spliced corn and potatoes from the marketplace. As the head of Asgrow seed company (a Monsanto subsidiary) candidly admitted to the press several years ago: "Labeling is the key issue. If you put a label on genetically engineered food you might as well put a skull and crossbones on it."

98P-1194

C108

CROSS FILE SHEET

FILE NO: 98P-1194/C108

SEE FILE NO: 92N-0139/C5369
99P-0485/C611